



YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Procedure #NP210.1 Fifth Disease

The Fifth Disease procedure promotes the good health and safety of students and employees and creates conditions for working and learning in which the well-being of staff and students will be supported.

Stakeholder Groups with Responsibilities

- Director of Education
- Superintendents
- Principals and Managers
- Human Resource Services
- Health and Safety
- All Staff

Relationship to Board priorities

This procedure supports staff and student health and well-being.

Department

Human Resource Services

It is the expectation of the York Region District School Board that all employees, students and persons invited to or visiting Board property; or partaking/volunteering in Board or school-sponsored events and activities will respect the policies and procedures of the Board. The term "parents" refers to both biological/adoptive parents and guardians in all Board policies and procedures.



Board Procedure #NP210.0 Fifth Disease

This procedure outlines the process for addressing incidents of fifth disease in our schools.

Application

Options for pregnant staff members do not apply to staff members who may have pregnant spouses.

Responsibilities

The Director of Education shall:

- allocate staff and resources to support the *Fifth Disease* procedure.

Human Resource Services – Attendance Support shall:

- ensure that appropriate medical documentation to support staff absences is obtained and retained, as required;
- ensure that staff members and the school have coded absences correctly; and
- inform replacement staff of reported incidents of fifth disease, as required.

Superintendents shall:

- identify an alternate work location for the non-immune pregnant staff member, if required; and
- monitor the reassignment and ensure appropriate communication between the two principals if a staff member has been reassigned due to a case of fifth disease in their regular work location.

Principals shall:

- as part of the school start-up and on a regular basis at staff meetings;
 - inform all staff about fifth disease and its implications by using information provided by [York Region Community and Health Services](#) (YRCHS),
 - advise pregnant staff members or female staff who may be planning to start a family to discuss their immunity to the disease with their physicians, and
 - emphasize cleanliness, such as, but not limited to, frequent hand washing, disinfecting toys and instructional materials, cleaning desk and table tops, as the best preventative action;
- confirm cases of fifth disease with the student's parent/guardian;
- if there is a confirmed case of fifth disease;
 - immediately post a notice, using the [template letter](#) and the YRCHS [fact sheet](#), on the front door of the school, in the front office and in the child care centre to inform staff, students and members of the community that there has been a diagnosed case of fifth disease at the school,
 - if any classes are scheduled to participate in activities at another York Region District School Board location, including, but not limited to outdoor education centres and schools, advise the administrative staff of the confirmed case of fifth disease within the school,
 - advise the STAR operators of the diagnosed case of fifth disease at the school and then record the following voice message on the STAR system by calling 905-727-7071, entering the school's access ID and pin, and choosing the option to record an announcement: "**Please be aware that there is a confirmed case of fifth disease at (name of the school). If you are pregnant or trying to become pregnant, please confirm with your physician that you not at risk before accepting any positions at this school**", and
 - remove the announcement from the STAR system when the school has had no new confirmed cases of fifth disease for 21 calendar days;

- if there is a pregnant staff member who is unsure of her immunity status to fifth disease;
 - advise her to seek advice from a health care professional about any possible risks (a blood test is available to determine whether a woman is immune to the disease),
 - if she is sent for a blood test to confirm immunity, consult with the superintendent of schools and **immediately** offer relocation to a school with no known evidence of fifth disease, pending confirmation of the results,
 - ensure that she remains at home with pay and no charge to sick leave while she is waiting for an offer of relocation,
 - record the absence as fifth disease in STAR while she is waiting for an offer of relocation, and
 - once she is transferred to another location, ensure that the absence is no longer recorded in the STAR system;
- if a pregnant staff member does not accept the offer of relocation;
 - inform her that she may remain at home using sick leave, if available, provided she has a note from a health care professional indicating that she has been sent for testing and is awaiting results and recommending that she not return to any school due to associated health risks,
 - record the absences as personal illness in the STAR system while she remains at home, and
 - inform her that if the blood test results indicate that she is immune to the disease, she is to return to her regular assignment immediately, unless otherwise indicated by her health care professional;
- if a pregnant staff member knows she is not immune to the disease;
 - assign her to work in a school with no known evidence of fifth disease until her school has had no new confirmed cases of fifth disease for 21 calendar days, unless otherwise indicated by her health care professional, and
 - ensure that the absence is not recorded in STAR;
- if the pregnant staff member does not accept the alternate work location offered, inform her that she can remain at home using sick leave, if available, if she has medical documentation recommending that she not return to any school due to associated health risks;
- inform the Human Resource Services Attendance Representative of any pregnant staff members who are being accommodated through this process;
- provide the Human Resource Services Attendance Representative with the medical documentation from the pregnant staff member, if applicable;
- inform a pregnant staff member who knows she is immune to fifth disease that she may continue to work within the school; and
- if a student at the school is pregnant, make suitable accommodations, as required, such as, but not limited to, arranging temporary placement at an alternate school.

Managers and supervisors shall:

- provide reasonable accommodation to pregnant staff members who have been assigned to work at a location that has a confirmed case of fifth disease.

Pregnant Staff Members shall:

- speak with their principal or manager when they receive notification of a confirmed case of fifth disease at their work location;
- if unsure of their immunity status to fifth disease;
 - seek advice from a health care professional about any possible risks (a blood test is available to determine whether a woman is immune to the disease),
 - understand that if sent for the blood test, the principal, in consultation with the superintendent of schools, will **immediately** offer relocation to a school with no known evidence of fifth disease while they wait for the results, and
 - understand that they will remain at home with pay and no charge to sick leave while waiting for an offer of relocation;

- if they do not accept the offer of relocation;
 - understand that they may remain at home using sick leave, if available, provided they have a note from a health care professional recommending that they not return to any school due to associated health risks, and
 - understand that if the blood test results indicate that they are immune to the disease, they are to return to their regular assignments immediately, unless otherwise indicated by a health care professional; and
- if they know they are not immune to the disease;
 - understand that they will be assigned by the principal, in consultation with the superintendent of schools, to work in a school with no known evidence of fifth disease until their regular work location has had no new confirmed cases of fifth disease for 21 calendar days, unless otherwise indicated by a health care professional,
 - if they do not accept the alternate work location offered by the principal, understand they can remain at home using sick leave, if available, if they provide the principal with supporting medical documentation from a health care professional recommending that they not return to any school due to associated health risks, and
 - when visiting other Board locations, note any posted notices indicating the confirmed case of fifth disease at the location.

Staff shall:

- immediately notify the principal of any reported diagnosis of fifth disease.

Pregnant Students shall:

- speak with their principal when they see notification of a confirmed case of fifth disease; and
- understand that if they are not immune or aware of their immunity to fifth disease, they will be offered suitable accommodations, as required, if there is a confirmed case of fifth disease at their school.

Definitions

[Fifth Disease](#)

Fifth disease is a mild infection most prevalent among young children. [York Region Community and Health Services](#) does not classify this illness as a reportable disease and does not track its occurrence. Its incubation period may range from four to 20 days before a bright red or rosy rash appears on both cheeks for one to three days (“slapped cheek” appearance). It is during the incubation period that this virus is communicable. Students with fifth disease are permitted to attend school even with the rash because the contagious period for this disease occurs before the rash appears. There is no immunization against this disease and it is not treatable. In non-immune pregnant women, exposure to this disease may be harmful to the fetus.

Staff Absence Replacement System (STAR)

The Staff Absence Replacement System (STAR) is the Board’s electronic system that tracks staff absences and dispatches replacement staff to work location.

History

Formerly: *Standing Memo S154, Fifth Disease (June 2004)*

Approved: April 2009

Working Document: March 2013

Revised: December 2013